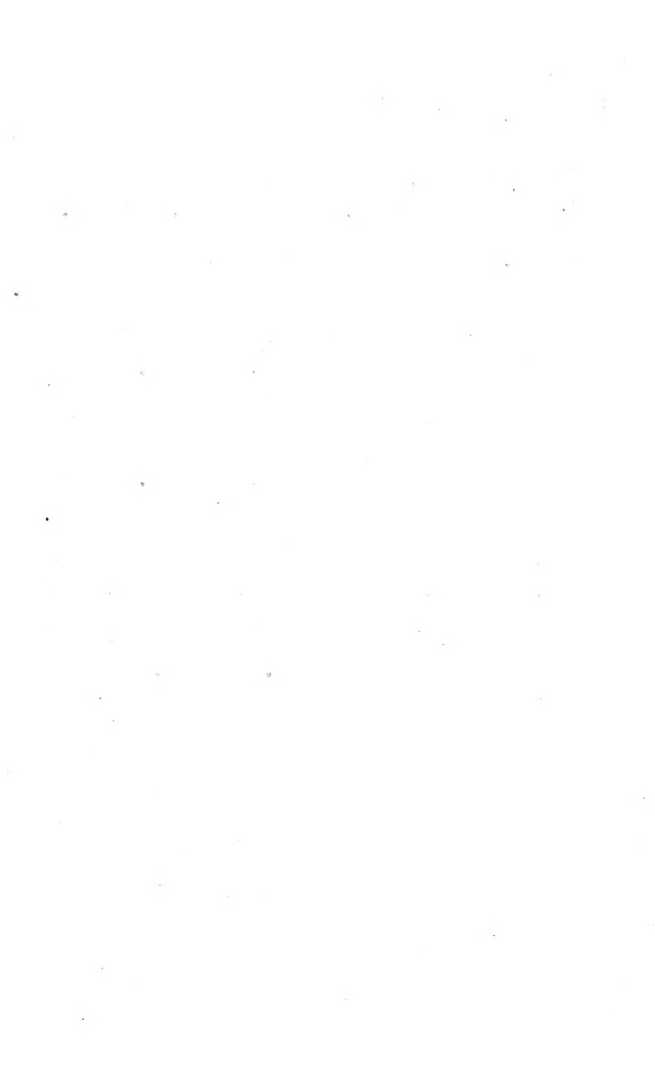


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SUGGESTIONS

TO

MINDS PERPLEXED BY THE GORHAM CASE.

A SERMON

PREACHED AT THE ROYAL CHAPEL, WHITEHALL,
ON SEXAGESIMA SUNDAY, 1850.

BY

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ADVERTISEMENT.

I do not think it necessary to make any apology for preaching or for publishing the following Sermon, beyond what is contained in itself. Had there been time I should have wished to append to it such a review of the history of the Royal Supremacy, and of the existing state of the law, and such a catena of authorities, as would justify the assertions now made. But these are not necessary for the acceptance of the principles suggested; and the suggestions, if assented to, may by God's blessing be sufficient to effect the object at heart, the soothing and calming if possible, if only in some few minds, anxieties and alarms, which seem tending to very mischievous results.



A SERMON.

ACTS xv. 1, 2.

And certain men which came down from Judea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved. When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question.

I HAVE now during the last month briefly and most imperfectly touched on a few considerations, which may awaken a thoughtful mind to the practical importance of the doctrine of Regeneration in holy Baptism—its importance in the education of our children. And if we ask what this doctrine is, the answer, without any subtle refinement, or attempt to be wise beyond what is written, is easy. It is such a gift and communication of God's Holy Spirit to the recipient of baptism, when no

bar is placed by wilful sin to the free grace of God, as makes him really and truly, in some mysterious but certain way, a member of that mystical body of Christ in which there are "many members but one Spirit;" a child of God as human beings are the children of human beings, by a participation, not nominal and hypothetical, but real and substantial, in the nature and being of his heavenly Father; and an inheritor of that kingdom of heaven which cannot be inherited by flesh and blood^a, by any thing but God's Holy Spirit. To speculate or define the exact mode in which this new principle of life, this second birth is wrought in the soul, or to impose our definition and description upon others, or to speak of the fact in any formal language but that of the Scriptures and the Church, is idle. It is worse than idle; it is presumptuous and most dangerous to the faith both of others and of ourselves.

And in pointing out the practical importance of the question, I have not omitted to warn (whenever we are dealing with the internal proofs of revelation, such warnings are always necessary)—to warn those who heard me, again and again, that the practical importance of a Christian doctrine in our own

^a 1 Cor. xv. 50.

eyes, is not the measure of its claim on our acceptance. It is not by this that we are to decide, whether or no it be true, that is, whether God has proclaimed it. Our ways are not as His ways, nor our eyes as His eyes. And though it is a good and rightful exercise of our understanding to "meditate in His precepts" and "to have respect unto His ways;" to trace out their righteousness, and usefulness, and blessedness, and their harmony with God's voice within our hearts, and with His voice as it speaks to us through His works; there is only one question to be asked before we receive and obey. Has God declared it? What He has declared we know through Christ; what Christ declared through His Apostles; what the Apostles, whether in writing or by word of mouth, we learn through the radiating independent concurrent branches of the Catholic Church of old, in whose steps our own Church walks, not holding its doctrine from men, or preaching any other Gospel than that "once for all delivered to the saints." This is enough. And here I would willingly have closed.

But there is a question of scarcely less practical importance; one, be assured, involving the happiness and usefulness, it may be the immortal souls of many of our brethren, members of our own English Church in this land, a question

pressing upon the hearts, and perplexing the minds of hundreds at this day, at this hour. And I have resolved, not without reluctance, to speak openly upon it; the more so, that a few casual words dropt by me in this place, without direct reference to this question, have been caught up and widely disseminated. And whatever is stated on a subject of such moment at this time ought to be carefully weighed, cautiously guarded against misconstruction, and accurately and punctiliously expressed.

And some of us will not wish to listen. There are subjects on which you do not like to be spoken to from the pulpit; subjects of common life, realities, occurrences of the day, the things which form the topics of social conversation every-where—what newspapers are full of, what assemblages are called to discuss, what meets us in the streets, in our homes, at our dinner tables, every where but in the house of God, and from the lips of God's ministers in the pulpit. You allow the clergy (I speak of the world in general) to recite Scripture, to deliver theories, to reason upon abstractions, to lay down the general indisputable laws of morals and religion in calm, cool, elaborate essays, in which nothing occurs to be disputed, because nothing occurs to touch upon any quick sensitive chord of our heart. We have fenced round the language of

the pulpit with formalities and etiquettes, to guard ourselves from being disturbed by its freedom; as if an Englishman's seat in his church were like his private home, a castle where he might be secure (not merely as an individual from personalities, which the Church abhors, but collectively in the person of the congregation) from the intrusion even of the ministers of God, even when they are fulfilling their mission of speaking to you openly and directly on all that concerns the truth of God, the state of your souls, or the welfare of His Church. And this is the answer to that melancholy problem, why so many thousands of sermons are delivered every Sunday in our churches, with such facilities for acting on the minds of hearers, and yet they do not act at all. There is an unreality about them. They do not speak of the things and questions in which we are most interested in the week. They may be sensible, true, correctly written, unimpeachable in doctrine; but we listen without attention, and depart without remembering them. They deal with abstractions, not with living and present facts. And the moment they touch on these facts, there starts up a feeling of pain, and surprise, and alarm, as if the decorum of the pulpit was about to be violated, and even the immunity of God's House of

Prayer — its immunity from the strife and struggles of the world without its walls. This is why a clergyman would hesitate, before he spoke openly and unreservedly, especially to a congregation like the present, of that subject now so anxiously engaging the thoughts of Christ's Church in this country, the Judgment at present pending before one of the highest Tribunals in the land, touching the question of Baptismal Regeneration.

—And yet, is not the day gone by for formalisms and conventionalisms in the pulpit? Is not the time come, when we must all speak out, speak openly—speak fearlessly—without circumlocution—as we speak in matters of life and death—in plain English, as Englishmen to Englishmen—and must speak from our pulpits? Where else is the voice of the clergy to be heard? They are shut out, happily shut out, from Parliament; silenced and disbanded the moment they would proceed to deliberate in their own constitutional assembly; prohibited from meeting in Synods; unable to bring their words home to the people committed to their charge except from the pulpit. Where should they give utterance to their warnings, their complaints, their declarations of truth, if not in the house of God, in which they are set every Sabbath, to “teach and to premonish, to feed and provide for the

Lord's family"... "the Church and congregation which is His spouse and His body" ... "whereunto if there shall happen any hurt or hindrance by reason of their negligence, they know the greatness of the fault, and also the horrible punishment that will ensue^b." If any one here present should be offended at the intrusion of an unwelcome, unpalatable subject, I beseech him to remember this. Let him consider that there may be here (as there are all around us) members of Christ's Church, keenly, cruelly, distressed; alarmed (I will not say without reason, though perhaps beyond due measure) at the perils in which the faith of Christ, the liberties of His Church, its vitality and power, its very essence and being, seem to them to be involved at this moment in this empire. They are perplexed and confounded. There is something so palpably false, and wrongful, and destructive in processes which are passing before their eyes, that they ask themselves if the very ground on which they have been standing, the whole system to which they have been clinging, is not hollow and false likewise. They hear the taunts of the adversaries of the Church—of those especially who have deserted her—triumphing over them in what they feel—what they cannot but feel—to be not merely a degra-

^b Ordaining of Priests.

dation and insult, but a servitude incompatible with their existence as the rightful messengers and witnesses of God's truth. They feel entangled by past compromises, alarmed by future probabilities, bewildered by conflicting relations, which require a calm and practised eye to distinguish and to reconcile. And thus in bitterness of heart, smarting as they are from almost daily wounds, with something of indignation, something perhaps of rashness, to be forgiven, surely we will hope to be forgiven, in the sight of God, because kindled by zeal for His house, they speak (have we not heard them?) as if they stood upon the verge of a precipice, and only waited for the voice of the tempter to throw themselves down.

It is of such minds that I am thinking in the suggestions which I am about to make. They will not touch upon any circumstances of the cause now pending, or be confined to any one possible termination of it. I would offer them to both classes, those who believe in the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, and those who reject it, but who both agree in this, in thinking that a decision, whatever it may be, counter to their own opinion, must hazard the faith, and vitality, and spiritual authority of the English Church, and involve the necessity of departing from it. There is something fearful

in the fact that such words are lightly hazarded, and such thoughts to any extent cherished. Surely there must be something weak and unstable in the ground on which we have built our faith and attachment to the Mother who bore us to Christ, when her children can without a struggle thus look to the possibility of deserting her. Surely God's ministers may be pardoned, if they endeavour to clear and disentangle some of the difficulties and misconceptions which are thus tempting the souls of their brethren.

These then are some of the principles and considerations, principles enforced and maintained by the greatest authorities in our Church, which by God's blessing may enable us to regard the present position of the Church in regard to this vital question, and any approaching determination of it, with more calmness, and equanimity; and as regards the Church itself, almost with indifference. I will state them briefly, and leave the application to ourselves.

First then the Church of Christ (and the Church of Christ, remember, is not limited to the Clergy, but embraces the whole congregation of Christ's faithful servants united in her one Catholic Apostolic faith, by His sacraments duly administered, under His officers divinely appointed, and armed with the authority of the

Apostles) the Church of Christ in this land is a Polity, or Body Corporate; or to use the title given to it by our laws, a State; or to speak of it in the language of the Bible, a Kingdom, independent in itself, separate from the world, charged by God with its own peculiar functions, armed with all essential authority to fulfil those functions, under Christ as its spiritual (remember, its spiritual) Head—Christ, not any human being, either Sovereign or Pope.

Secondly, these functions, and this authority, and this kingdom, are confined, strictly and happily confined, to spiritual matters; to the delivery of our witness to God's truth, to preaching His Word, to ministering His Sacraments, to the exercise of spiritual discipline, to "feeding the flock of Christ, which He has purchased with His own blood." All beyond is of this world, temporal; and is placed by the hand of God under the dominion of the rulers of this world—Kings, Princes, Supreme Legislatures, all the Powers that be, in the civil and temporal State; who are themselves the ministers of God, charged by Him with their temporal authority, armed with His consecrated powers, not less responsible to Him in their province, and to be venerated and obeyed in that province, scarcely less, if at all less, than the ministers of the Gospel in their own.

Thirdly, these spiritual functions, powers and privileges of the Church, with all the independent rights, liberties, and distinct operations essential to their due exercise, are of such a nature—they are such a trust committed to us from God—that they are absolutely inalienable and indefeasible. No lapse can extinguish, no laches forfeit, no prescription bar them. ‘*Nullum tempus occurrit Ecclesiæ*’ is a fundamental maxim of our English laws. No ecclesiastical authority however exalted, no Prelates, or Synods, or Convocations, or bodies of Clergy, in one age or generation, or succession of generations, through any length of usurpation, could sign them away, cancel them, surrender them, bind posterity to their surrender, detract from them, destroy them. There are rights which man cannot part with, because they are not his own. And such are the spiritual rights and independence of the Church of Christ. Even were it true, as when facts are rightly examined, it is far less true than is supposed, that at any period of past history, in some moment of terror, or danger, under threat, or by compulsion, or through flattery, or in error, our ancestors in the English Church had even, finally, unreservedly, without limitation, given up any portion of these rights—had complimented away their duty, and sanctioned an

invasion and usurpation of spiritual authority by a temporal arm, that compromise is in itself null and void. It may and must be recalled, and cancelled at the first moment when the mind of the Church returns to itself. The compact, if it were a compact, must be annulled. The powers must be retracted. The Church must re-assume its own. Christ the eternal, the unchangeable, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, must be re-instated in His sovereignty. The fetters must be shaken from His limbs. He cannot see corruption, cannot die even after having hung upon the cross, and yielded up His spirit for a time under the hands of man. If it be not so, let the prescriptions of Rome be allowed. Repeal the Reformation. The Reformation was only a resumption of such dormant but unextinguishable rights.

Fourthly, if there be any one function peculiarly reserved to the Church, to her Ministers, her Bishops, her Synods, and her Councils, on which no secular power has a right to intrude, which God has committed to her as her especial work, it is the maintenance, the preservation, and the declaration of His truth, His doctrine. "Ye are My witnesses." Kings indeed, and temporal powers, as Christians themselves, and contained within the body of

the Church, may by the powers they possess, and must by the civil duties they exercise, be interested, deeply interested in the right exercise of her spiritual functions. They cannot sit inactive or silent, when the Church is neglecting God's truth, or permitting it to be incrustated with error. And thus God permits, and man blesses their efforts in such evil days, not to usurp the functions of the Church, and to assume to themselves the preaching of God's word, but to restore, repair, call into play, and guard from abuse, that organization of the Church which God has framed for the maintenance of His doctrine. This was the office of the first Christian Emperors: this was the work of English Sovereigns at the Reformation; this is that "prerogative given always to all godly princes in Holy Scripture by God Himself," and to which the Royal Supremacy is in such matters limited in our own Church, at once by the declaration of sovereigns, the definition of statutes, and the protests of our Articles. To affirm the contrary is with them a slander. "When we attribute," they say^c, "to the king's majesty the chief government, by which titles we understand the minds of some slanderous folks to be offended, we give not to our princes the ministering either of God's word or

^c Article 37.

of the Sacraments, the which thing the injunctions also lately set forth by Elizabeth our queen do most plainly testify ; but that only prerogative which we see to have been given always to all godly princes in Holy Scriptures by God Himself, that is, that they should rule all states and degrees committed to their charge by God, whether they be ecclesiastical or temporal, and restrain with the civil sword the stubborn and evil doers.” And then follows that necessary warning, which is the real key to interpret and limit all the strong assertions of the supremacy of the British sovereign over the British Church, “The bishop of Rome hath no jurisdiction in this realm of England.” It was against his usurpations and intrusions that the Supremacy of the crown in this realm was so strongly re-established and protected ; and this is the measure of the means taken to guard against the evil, and the excuse, if any be required, for the wrong which for a time they may have inflicted on the Church.

But fifthly, let us never be tempted by hasty alarm, or injustice, or even persecution, lightly to abandon that salutary and Christian doctrine, that the “Sovereign hath the chief power in this realm, and other his dominions,” and that “to him the chief government of all estates of this realm, whether they be ecclesiastical or civil, in all causes

doth appertain ;” in all causes, ecclesiastical or civil. In each the final reference may well be made to him, so long at least as he is a member of the Church. And yet this reference no more implies that he can sit in person, decide by his own will, choose his own arbiters, or refer the decision to any but fixed and constitutional and rightful tribunals, in ecclesiastical than in civil cases. All civil appeals lie to the Crown ; but the Crown can only decide them by calling into play the constitutional civil tribunals. And ecclesiastical appeals, in like manner, so long as the crown is a member of the Church, may lie in like manner to the Crown ; but they alike must be referred to a constitutional ecclesiastical tribunal. And all the operation of the Crown is to bring those tribunals into action ; and the only rightful tribunal for deciding a question of doctrine must be such an ecclesiastical body as is authorized by the Apostolical constitution of the Church. I mean to say that the fact of an ultimate appeal to the Civil Power, so long as it is a member of the Church, even in questions of doctrine, is no badge of servitude, or dangerous submission, nothing to disturb and distress the mind of an English Churchman, who realizes in their fullest extent the spiritual prerogatives of Christ’s Church, if the proceeding of the Crown in spi-

ritual matters is bounded as it is in temporal matters, to seeing that the question is decided by a proper ecclesiastical tribunal. Such a power may be more than innocuous; it may be absolutely necessary to the safety both of the Church and of the State.

Sixthly, it is important to remember in any moment of irritation, or disappointment, or alarm, which may be provoked by existing anomalies, that the Crown is, in the present instance, not breaking out into any novel aggression upon the Church, but only pursuing a course marked out by the existing law of the land, and till this moment never adequately protested against by the Church. The State may fairly be supposed to be ignorant of the wrong which it may be doing, and of the danger which it may be threatening to the Church. It is deciding an ecclesiastical appeal, not by itself, but by a legal, and, as far as the law of the land goes, a regular and authorized tribunal. How such a tribunal came to be originally established, without producing at the time the same dread and the same public resentment with which its present operation is now generally regarded, is a matter rather of shame to the Church than of complaint against the State. If we, the members of the Church, have been careless in asserting our rights, dead to the im-

portance of guarding, most rigidly guarding, the deposit of truth committed to us by God—if we have neglected to watch the proceedings of past legislatures, to warn them against trespassing on forbidden ground, and to follow up our warnings by positive practical measures—and if the enemy has stolen in while we slept, and has sown tares among our wheat, our duty is to condemn ourselves rather than to be indignant with others. Let us bless God that our eyes are now opened; let us be thankful that we are now at last pained, aggrieved, alarmed at peril to God's truth: that times and circumstances are changed. There was a day, perhaps, when the signal for disquietude and resistance would have been some attempt to touch the property, and civil indulgences of the Church; now, praised be God's name, and praised His Holy Spirit, perish our property, only preserve us God's truth. It is a proof of our changed hearts, an omen of better things. Let us be hopeful and rejoicing for the future, while we set ourselves to amend the past.

Seventhly, it is not to be forgotten that there are cases, many cases, in which temporal and spiritual things are so mixed that it is scarcely possible to separate them. And although in such cases great nicety and forbearance is required in those who administer the

law ; and sometimes, as Bishop Gibson complains, very, very little is observed ; we are not hastily to think or to say that even a civil tribunal is stepping beyond its limits, or obtruding upon the spiritual functions of the Church, when in some cause, primarily of a temporal character, affecting property or civil rights, and therefore within the province of the civil power, some assertion or reference to doctrinal points may be inextricably entangled with it. It is a case of repeated occurrence, even in dissenting communions which protest most earnestly, and guard themselves most rigidly against the interference of the State. A claim of property is contested ; and the constitution of the Free Kirk of Scotland, the doctrines of dissenting communities, the internal regulations of Romish monastic bodies, are brought, necessarily, and fully, before our civil tribunals. They examine doctrinal statements, interpret words, even overrule practices, which cannot be divested of a spiritual character. No precaution on the part of the Church, no protest, no delicacy of the State, no nice discrimination could prevent the possibility of such entanglement. He who hopes so to separate the temporal and the spiritual in the State, as that they shall never clash, never be confounded, never trespass for a moment one upon the other, may hope to dis-

tinguish as clearly between man's soul and his body, or so to fix lines and barriers between any relations of life, as to prevent the possibility of their occasional violation. But he who understands human nature knows that the right and the true are practically maintained not by any inviolable unswerving adherence to strict laws and definitions of duties, but by a constant struggle to correct and amend errors. Let us learn to forbear with each other, and to be patient with the infirmities of man.

Eighthly, when attention has been called, as at present, to some possible or real abuse of the civil power, some dangerous prerogative, or false constitution, (I am speaking solely to Churchmen,) which affects the duties and the spiritual privileges of the Church conferred on it by Christ Himself, let us beware how we at once rise up in indignation and jealousy, and resentment, as if wrong was meditated and intended, and may not be remedied or prevented by fair and reasonable appeals to the conscience of the State. Till these appeals have been made and failed, we have no right to complain, and still less to despair. There is undoubtedly at present, looking to the state of the nation, and to the position of the Church, a most formidable anomaly and danger in the supposition that a question of

Christian doctrine which Christ has placed in the hands of His Church, should be decided by a tribunal, which is a pure creation of the civil power, and which has no place or office in the Church. As Englishmen would feel if a question of property were referred by the Crown to the decision of an ecclesiastical Synod, so Churchmen feel, must feel, ought to feel, I pray God they always may feel, at the thought of any merely temporal tribunal, it may be a stranger to their communion, presuming to determine what is the Word of God committed to their own keeping and preaching. But as yet the mischief is not done, and the evil is not irreparable. And our duty, our solemn duty, from which we must not shrink, is at once, before any decision be given, before we can in any way be supposed to be interested by the positive determination of the tribunal, to make our appeal to the Sovereign.

And it is impossible that the appeal can be rejected. Englishmen will not hear of it; they will not be accomplices in such oppression; they will not tolerate such hypocrisy as would be involved in the refusal of our claim. It may be that statesmen love not the Church; that they are jealous of her powers, impatient of her remonstrances, scornful of her authority. So it has always been. And, it may be, the day

is past for recollections of happier things ; of the blessings, the aids, the mercies which this nation has derived from its Church ; of the thousand ties of love which bind the heart of a Churchman to his country. Set them all aside, and still our appeal must be granted. What? abjure all cognizance of religion, and intrude upon the religion of the Church? Cast off every profession of a creed, and prescribe doctrines to the Church? Let loose every caprice of human folly to run after its own devices, and put chains upon the Church, when she would walk in the path laid down by the Apostles? Raise the watchword of liberty of conscience, and pay no regard to the consciences of Christ's ministers? Cry toleration, and then persecute? Will Englishmen endure this? Is it possible that the Legislature should refuse to give to us what they have given to all? Is the Church to be the only spiritual community excluded from the liberties of religion, and made the plaything of a tyranny? It cannot be.

And when the appeal is received, and we are called on to reconstitute in place of the present tribunal, an ecclesiastical court of ultimate appeal under the Sovereign, one which the Church may recognise as her own voice, and acquiesce in its decisions, let us not be hasty. Let us "go up to Jerusalem unto the

Apostles and elders." Let us not invent some scheme of our own; let us have nothing of human devising either in the past days or the present. Let us go back to those days of the Church, in which the Catholic institutions of the Apostles may be most easily traced, and take as far as possible such a model from them, as will prove under every future trial and perplexity, I do not say a guarantee against error, or false judgment, or disappointment on our own part, but a consolation in distress, an answer to our own conscience, and a defence before the tribunal of God. We must indeed go back far. Not to Convocation, for Convocation is a civil creation, a clerical Parliament instituted for purposes of finance, not a Synod of God's ministers for proclaiming His word. And the usurpation of Rome more or less disorganized the Church by this very question of appeals. To her we entirely owe our present troubles. The present irregular and dangerous tribunal is such a natural inheritance and offshoot from her first violation of the polity of the Church, that we can scarcely trust to any precedent more recent than the early centuries of Ecclesiastical history. What form of Synod, under what modification, and with what precise jurisdiction would be most suited to our wants, will be a question for the profoundest research. Only let

us pray God once more to guide us by His Holy Spirit, and to preserve us from introducing into the organization of His Church any novel and merely human device. It will assuredly fail us soon. It may be we shall never have again an opportunity of repairing and reconstructing another.

And lastly, let us join at once cheerfully, and firmly, and hopefully, to enter a public, a widespread protest, not so much against the existing tribunal itself, (for perhaps it is only determining a question of temporalities, and it may not venture to pronounce upon any spiritual question,) but against the fears and alarms of our brethren, who dread lest if it should so venture, the act would compromise the Church, impair her divine character, rivet fetters on her conscience, and almost forfeit her spiritual birth-right. What can be the meaning of such fears? If to determine questions of spiritual doctrine is the inalienable, indefeasible privilege of the Church acting through its own spiritual tribunals, a privilege conferred on it by God Himself, and of which no earthly power can deprive it, then the decree of any external tribunal can be no more binding on its conscience than a breath of empty air. It will no more affect the Church than a vote of a foreign legislature would influence the conduct of an Eng-

lishman ; than a magistrate would be decided in his judicial functions by the opinions of a popular meeting. He looks to his Sovereign, and we look to Christ ; he receives his commission from his Sovereign, and we from Christ ; he executes his Sovereign's commands, and we the commands of Christ ; he attends to no other voice than his Sovereign's, and the tribunals' appointed by his Sovereign, and we listen to none other but Christ's, and the tribunals which Christ has sanctioned, the Synods of His Church.

And yet we are bound also to warn the State ; to remind it of that solemn injunction, " Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things which are God's ;" to bring before it the fate of those who have trespassed on holy ground, burnt incense in unhallowed censers, created priests of their own choice, built altars after their own fashion, set up calves at Bethel, tampered with God's truth, intruded where none but the priests of God might enter, touched the ark though with the thought of saving it, and yet have been struck dead. It is our duty to warn it ; and our duty to pray and remonstrate that it would not so risk the souls of the rulers and the souls of the ruled. And no less with firmness yet with temperance, meekly but boldly,

publicly but with reverence and respect, we are bound to remind it of the only course, which the members of Christ's Church can take, when the one alternative is left, to obey either God or man. O that those would place before them—those I mean, who shrink, and tremble, and doubt, and vacillate, and almost fall off from their faith and allegiance to their dear and blessed mother the Church of England, as soon as she is threatened by foes, or betrayed by friends, or perplexed with difficulties, or menaced by the secular powers of this world; O that they would place before them this last alternative, and learn how weak, how impotent any the most mighty arm of flesh is to enslave them, when they are resolved in the spirit of God to follow their Almighty Lord patiently and submissively to the cross, and to proclaim His testimony to the last! O that they would remember that the soul of the Christian is beyond the reach of any power of earth! Kings, Princes, Legislatures, Parliaments, ministers, nobles and armies, prisons and spoliation, poverty, confiscation, dishonour, exile, death, the rack and the stake, the fiery furnace, and the den of lions, all these, all the powers of the world, may be let loose upon Christ's Church again; as they were let loose on her in her first infancy, in her entrance on her wandering in the wilderness. The

last days may be like the first. But they cannot touch the soul. They cannot—no, not all of them confederated—they cannot stifle its voice; they cannot coerce its functions of witnessing to God's truth in the world. They can only bring out more clearly the doctrine of God—in letters more indelible, more deeply stamped upon the hearts and minds of generation upon generation, more widely spread over the earth, more imperishably transmitted, if only we will deliver it unshrinkingly. O that in this day of rebuke and trial we may so deliver it to this nation! O that this nation may hear in time, and be spared in the hour of its visitation; in that great day when it shall be called with all the nations of the earth, into the valley of Jehosaphat, that God may plead with it for its sins!

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